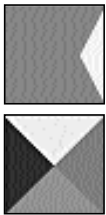


FLEET FOCUS



Bravo Zulu

Patrol Squadron 9

Navy Achievement Medal
ADC (AW) David Quioque
AW1 (AW) Kenneth Bruce
AW1 (AW) Ty Rogers
YN2 Nicole Washington

Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal
AECS (AW) Terry Malone
IS1 Cheryl Ano

Letter of Commendation
AW1 Ronnie Baskin
AD1 Hodari Howard
AO1 Michael Corley
AW2 Russell Toelken
AMS2 Brian Anspach
AE2 (AW) Valerie Pastor
AO2 Alfredo Semper

Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist
AE1 Zoraida Lockwood

Safety Pro of the Month
AMS2 Julie Lapiere
AMHAN Chad Pemberton

USS Hopper (DDG 70)

Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal

Lt. Cmdr. Paul Schlise
Lt. Scott Shepard
Lt.j.g. Josh Olson
Ens. Ian Nesbitt
GMC(SW) Roosevelt Diggs
FCC(SW) Adam Morgan
GM1(SW) Troy Carter

VPU-2 selects top Sailors for first quarter

By YNC (AW) Deseriee A. Gilliland

VPU-2

The Commanding Officer of Special Projects Patrol Squadron Two, Cmdr. Gregory D. Osborne, recently announced Sailor's of the Quarter from January 1999 through March 1999.

The Senior Sailor of the Quarter is Aviation Structural Mechanic Hydraulics (AW) 1st Class Romel S. Sotto; the Junior Sailor of the Quarter is Aviation Storekeeper 2nd Class Hortencia K. Barela; the Naval Aircrewman of the Quarter is Photographer's Mate 3rd class (NAC) Charity E. Collins; and the Airman of the Quarter is Airman Joshua R. Avalos.

What did they do to receive recognition as Sailor of the Quarter?

The Senior Sailor of the Quarter, AHM1 (Hydraulics) Romel S. Sotto, ensured 11 work center audits were completed as well as coordinating two phase inspections on a mission aircraft during a high operations tempo period.

Additionally, he was hand picked to rewrite the P-3 specific Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist (EAWS) Instructional guide implemented by all Commander, Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet squadrons.

The Junior Sailor of the Quarter, AK2 Hortencia K. Barela, ensured the squadron's fuel OPTAR account was maximized with over 99 percent utilization.

She was also responsible obtaining a myriad of non-mission supply aircraft parts that greatly contributed to the squadron's mission.

Her supervisor AK1(AW) Campbell states, "Petty

Officer Barela is a top-notch individual.

"She can easily fill a Petty Officer First Class billet."

The Naval Aircrewman of the Quarter, PH3 Charity E. Collins, obtained real time and accurate up to date photography in 42 missions which proved vital to the operational success of the deployed aircraft and crew. Chief Intelligence Specialist Scott Chaney maintains, "Petty Officer Collins is a top-notch professional.

"She spends a tremendous amount of time perfecting her craft as a photographer as well as honing her multi-faceted skills in the Intelligence Department.

"She is always there when someone needs a helping hand and goes the extra mile to help out her shipmates."

The Airman of the Quarter, AN Joshua R. Avalos, is the Sailor that Lt. Christopher McDowell assigns to ensure new check-ins are properly indoctrinated on proper hazardous material procedures, work request repair procedures, supply order procedures, and self-help procedures.

Lt. McDowell confirms that AN Avalos is a hard charger. "I appreciate the fact that he does a job right the first time. Ever since he checked on board he has hit the deck running."

"The competition was very stiff," said Commander Osborne, "The military acumen, professional competence and leadership abilities the nominees possess made it difficult to chose only one from each respective category. The Chiefs and the First Classes did an excellent job in choosing an individual that represents the caliber of professionals we have at this squadron."

Hawkbill: Sailors assist scientists on ecological mission

Continued from A-1

ice and proceeded north.

During the eight-day transit through the Bering Strait, Hawkbill watchstanders carefully navigated the 5,000-ton, 52-foot tall, 292-foot long submarine under a thick canopy of ice. What made this transit of the Bering Strait so challenging were the significant ice "keels" peppering Hawkbill's planned navigation track. Ice keels are created when sheets of ice collide, causing one to raft upon another. This in turn causes the ice to accumulate above and below the surface. Crewmembers report having seen ice keels measuring in excess of 90 feet deep this trip.

At times, crewmembers held their breath as the ship hugged the bottom maintaining a scant 20 feet of water under hull while ducking under ice keels, sometimes missing their sail by 15 feet.

"I have never been so proud of any crew, and their efforts have proved what a well-trained submarine crew can accomplish. They functioned as such a team I can't believe it," said Cdr. Bob Perry, Hawkbill's commanding officer. "As far as I'm concerned, they're all true American heroes," said the Aiea, Hawaii resident.

Once clear of the perilous Bering Strait, the submarine headed directly for the ice camp, headed by Capt. Jeff Fischbeck, Director of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory in San Diego, Calif., who also served as SCICEX-99 Officer in Tactical Command (OTC).

"I never truly appreciated what it took to actually set up this type of operation in this remote of an area. It's obvious that these guys have it down to a science and this is a capability that the Navy has to maintain if we want to be successful in this important region," Fischbeck said.

The ice camp was established about 150 miles Northwest of Barrow, Alaska. The camp serves as a logistical home base to which the submarine could surface through the ice to conduct some science, replenish supplies and embark passengers. The temperature there averaged about 20 degrees F, with wind chill driving it to as low as 70 degrees F.

Hawkbill first surfaced at the camp on the morning of April 3rd, and picked up several scientists, a two-person CNN crew, a writer and photographer from National Geographic Magazine and some fresh fruits and vegetables. Konetzni also embarked for this leg of the journey.

"I really was amazed by how great the crew was, and how easy they made it look," said Jay Dickman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer from Littleton, Colo. who embarked the submarine and was shooting for National Geographic.

During this phase of the expedition, the submarine used its Seafloor Characterization and Mapping Pod (SCAMP), which provided several geophysical mapping surveys of the Chukchi Cap. The system provides on the order of 200 meters penetration of the sea bottom, allowing researchers to determine the layers of sediments making up the ocean floor. Additionally, SCAMP provides a graphic representation of the sea floor in a swath of up to four miles on either side of the submarine. Researchers onboard can actually see images of the sea floor as the ship travels over them using the advanced sonar technology.

"I think we found some exceptional stuff. Some of it we were looking for and some of it we weren't looking for. We found an uncharted seamount that created a little excitement," said Dr. Margo Edwards, from Placentia, Calif. Edwards is a geophysicist at the University of Hawaii and SCICEX-99's chief scientist.

All the data collected over this phase of the cruise will be taken back and studied for



USS Hawkbill photo

USS Hawkbill's (SSN 666) mast protrudes though polar ice at sunrise during joint, scientific operations - part of SCICEX '99.

years to help improve understanding of the geological evolution of the Arctic basin.

"When we have a chance to put all the information together it's really going to improve our understanding of the Arctic basin," she said.

In addition to SCAMP, Hawkbill has an elaborate sonar suite allows the ship to see above, below, forward and even sideways.

One of the more tense moments came when the submarine had warning indications that it was rapidly entering shallow water. Since there have been so few attempts at navigating in the Arctic Ocean, reliable soundings are few and far between. Sailors are forced to rely especially heavily on their equipment.

Electronics Technician 3rd Class Tommy Erikson of Boise, Idaho who was on watch as the quartermaster of the watch, immediately notified the officer of the deck of the danger indications and the ship took immediate actions to avert the disaster. Once indications had cleared, Hawkbill carefully turned back to more closely review what they had witnessed - or more appropriately heard - from their sonar suite. It turned out that the soundings were merely false echoes received by another one of the ship's receivers, and there was no real danger to the ship.

"My heart was racing. I was watching the ocean floor rise up before my eyes and that we may hit something that we didn't want to," said Erikson.

While the hazard to navigation was not real, the anxiety it created was. For his alertness and quick action, Konetzni presented Erikson with a letter of commendation later that day in front of the entire crew.

"That was actually the best thing I've gotten in my Navy career except for my fish (submarine qualification), because he was reading it and provided it to me only an hour or two after it happened," he said.

Following that leg of the transit the submarine again surfaced at the ice camp on April 10th, dropping off the media and picking up about one dozen distinguished visitors.

Guests for the overnight embark included Sen. Chuck Robb (D-Va.); the Honorable Dr. John Hamre, Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Honorable Richard Danzig, Secretary of the Navy; Dr. Lee Buchanan, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research Development and Acquisition; Adm. Jay Johnson, Chief of Naval Operations; Adm. Skip Bowman, Director of Naval Nuclear Propulsion; Dr. Rita Colwell, Director of the National Science Foundation. Rear Adm. Al Konetzni stayed on board to assist in touring the visitors.

The brief embark included submerging below the ice, a tour of the ship during which crew members briefed the guests on various systems, received a detailed brief on the science the team was conducting on board and enjoyed

a gourmet dinner prepared by the ship's mess specialists and enjoyed by the entire crew.

Later that evening Danzig, Johnson, Konetzni, and several of the ship's junior officers engaged in frank discussion for nearly two hours about how to improve retention among submarine junior officers.

"It was something I never thought I would get to do. They were genuinely interested in the retention of our level of officer and first-term enlisted," said Lt.j.g. Wes Bringham, of Irving, Texas.

Meanwhile Robb spoke with Electronics Technician 2nd Class Matt Schecter of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. in the submarine's control room for more than hour. The senator asked him about his equipment, and his personal opinions on the Navy.

"He was especially interested in how the ring-laser gyro worked, and asked me a lot about my background. He really seemed curious about what I was doing here," said Schecter.

Hawkbill surfaced a little before 6 a.m. the next morning and dropped the dignitaries off. The ship then embarked a reporter from the Christian Science Monitor and a film crew preparing a PBS documentary. The ship submerged a few hours later and embarked on the next crucial phase of science data collection and Arctic Sea exploration: Survey of the Alaskan Shelf. The submarine heavily involved in collecting water samples for analysis during this transit.

"We've seen indications a lot of variation in the presence of plant life," said Dr. Terry Whitlege, a scientist from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks who embarked to conduct science in this phase of the expedition.

"Once we get them back to our labs, we'll be able to extract a lot of very specific data from the samples collected here."

In an effort to collect water samples throughout the phase, the submarine painstakingly adhered to a track that required drawing water samples at predetermined depths and locations along a saw-tooth track. The charted plan effectively had the submarine dart back and forth along the Alaskan Shelf, an area also lacking in reliable soundings.

In order to successfully draw the samples along the vertical column of water, the submarine would start at a predetermined depth, deploy a Conductivity Temperature and Depth (CTD) probe to acquire preliminary data, and then spiral down using full rudder taking water samples various depths throughout the water column.

"You're leaning to the left for three hours with the full rudder slowly spiraling towards the bottom. It took a great deal of coordination between the navigation team, the ship control team and the scientists collecting data," said Lt. Kurt Stüdt of Madison, Wisc. who was officer of the deck during one of the hydrocasts.

"This was the first time I have gotten to do something like this. Eventually you become proficient at it, and it becomes a matter of pride between the watch teams to conduct the spiral as quickly as possible in order that the ship can continue collecting more data along the track," said Electronics Technician Seaman Tony Zampardo, who stood watch as Hawkbill's helmsman and in board planesman during some of the maneuver.

The ship completed the Alaskan Shelf survey and then surfaced one last time at the ice camp on the morning of April 16th. In addition to picking up a new team of researchers, they entertained a few more reporters at the camp. Crewmembers also loaded out more than one hundred CTDs and enough food stores to last them through their next port visit, which would be somewhere in Europe in May. The ship also received their last team of scientists.

"This is the first time in Hawkbill's 28-year life that she's been in the Atlantic Ocean," said Perry.

Enroute to the Atlantic, however, the crew has significant science to complete. Hawkbill will begin its cross-basin transect, throughout which it will continue to deploy CTDs and conduct submerged hydrocasts. After approximately five days, the submarine will spend nearly a dozen days conducting a survey of the Lomonosov Ridge.

Once completing this survey, the ship will begin heading south, finishing the cross-basin transect and will then spend another one week surveying the Arctic Mid-Ocean Ridge, the slowest moving ridge on the earth. The final science phase of SCICEX will include a transit through the Norwegian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Aside from the science the crew will be conducting while in the Arctic, there is also one more aspect of the cruise to which the crew is very much looking forward - a quick surfacing at the North Pole.

The crew will take the opportunity to bury the remains of Dr. Waldo Lyon, who is widely attributed as the father of the arctic submarine. He worked in the program since the late 1940's, and made nearly two dozen trips to the arctic on board Navy submarines. He passed away last May and requested he be laid to rest in the area to which he devoted most of his life.

Coincidentally, he rode the Hawkbill for the first Sturgeon-class submarine submerged winter-transit of the Bering Strait in 1973, and now he is making his final trip north on Hawkbill marking the last such trip by this class of submarine.

In an odd twist of fate, Hawkbill will return to its homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii later this summer, and will inactivate shortly thereafter.

Information surrounding SCICEX and the submarine can be found on the web at www.csp.navy.mil.